extra — another in W.H. cover-up

AP Wirephoto

President and Mrs. Nixon waved as they left for Washington from Florida

Watergate Case

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Nixon Met With Aides' Lawyer

Washington

President Nixon met for an hour here last Thursday with John J. Wilson, a Washington lawyer who is representing two presidential aides, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, in connection with the Watergate scandal.

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren announced the meeting at a news briefing in Key Biscayne, Fla., where the president ended his Easter weekend yesterday. But Warren was unable to answer the questions that reporters asked about the meeting: who had initiated it ? What had the two men discussed? Would Mr. Nixon retain Wilson to represent himself?

"I have no report to give you on the discussions," Warren said.

While many other members of the White House staff and of the committee for the re-election of the president have retained lawyers individually, it remained unclear why Haldeman, the president's chief of staff, and Ehrlichman, a counselor on domestic affairs, had hired the same lawyer.

Haldeman is thought to be a prime target of the continuing Senate and federal grand jury investigations of the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Watergate offices last summer and efforts to cover up the scandal since then.

President, who left most of his traveling entourage in had called Erlichman and Haldeman, as well as John W. Dean III, the White House counsel, on Sunday "to wish them well at Easter."

The President's spokesman also reiterated that there was "no change in the status of White House staff members."

Meanwhile, Ehrlichman engaged Clark MacGregor, Nixon's 1972 campaign manager, in a fresh dispute about official efforts to get to the bottom of the Watergate affair.

In an interview with the Washington Star-News, Ehrlichman said he had proposed last August "not only to the campaign manager but to the whole campaign

planning group that the time was right to make the fullest disclosure about Watergate."

MacGregor, who took over the campaign when John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general, left it in July, disagreed sharply.

"It may be that John, in his own individual circles, was talking with some anxiety about Watergate," said MacGregor, a former Representative from Minnesota who now represents the United Aircraft Corp. in Washington. "But that concern was never communicated to me."

When he took over the campaign, MacGregor recalled, Mitchell had conducted one investigation of campaign personnel and Dean was working on another of the White House staff. Late in August, he said, Ehrlichman asked him to issue a fresh statement on Watergate, but "no one could provide me with anything new or newsworthy."

A proposed "White Paper" that Dean drew up at the time was "deficient in both content and tone," MacGregor said.

According to Ehrlichman, however, there had been a specific request for a further inquiry into the re-election committee and a plan to announce the results after August 30, when the President flew to Hawaii.

N.Y. Times Service